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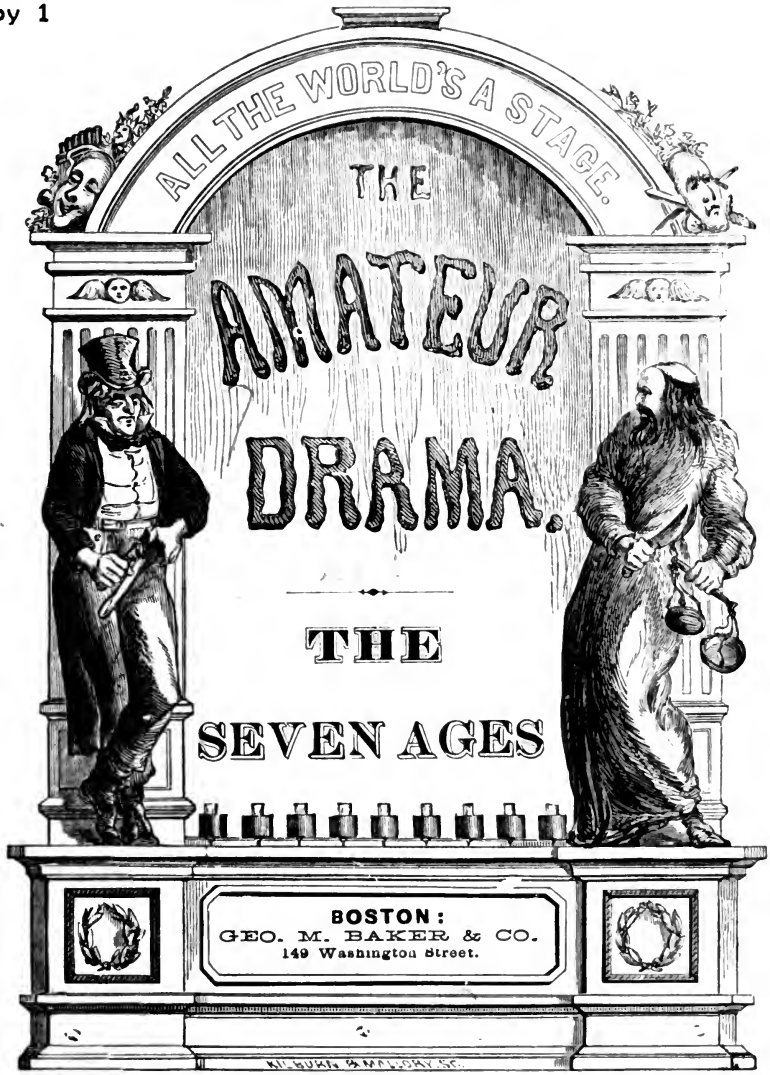

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THE SEVEN AGES.

A Tableau Entertainment.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Sylvia's Soldier,"
"Once on a Time," "Down by the Sea," "The Last Loaf,"
"Bread on the Waters," "Stand by the Flag," "The Tempter," "A Drop too
Much," "We're all Teetotalers," "A Little more Cider," "Thirty Minutes
for Refreshments," "Wanted, a Male Cook," "A Sea of Troubles,"
"Freedom of the Press," "A Close Shave," "The Great
Elixir," "The Man with the Demijohn," "Humors of
the Strike," "New Brooms sweep Clean," "My
Uncle the Captain," "The Greatest Plague
in Life," "No Cure, no Pay," "The
Grecian Bend," "War of the
Roses," "Lightheart's
Pilgrimage,"
"The
Sculptor's
Triumph," "Too
Late for the Train,"
"Snow-Bound," "The Ped-
dler of Very Nice," "Bonbons,"
"Capuletta," "An Original Idea," "My
Brother's Keeper," "Among the Breakers,"
"The Boston Dip," "The Duchess of Dublin," "A
Tender Attachment," "Gentlemen of the Jury," "A Public
Benefactor," "The Thief of Time," "The Hypochondriac," "The
Runaways," "Coals of Fire," "The Red Chignon," "Using the Weed,"
"A Love of a Bonnet," "A Precious Pickle," "The Revolt
of the Bees," "The Seven Ages,"
&c., &c., &c.

George Melville Baker.

BOSTON:
GEORGE M. BAKER & CO.,
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THE SEVEN AGES.

A TABLEAU ENTERTAINMENT.

[*Arrangement for Home Representation.* — Across the middle of the longest room in the house stretch curtains to separate in the middle and draw apart. You thus have a room for audience and a stage for performers. The stage should be divided in like manner by curtains to separate in the middle, giving a stage in front for performers, behind for tableaux. The rear or tableau stage should be draped with dark cloth (purple is best); there should be entrances on both sides, that the characters in the tableaux may pass on and off without being seen. Should two rooms with folding-doors between be used, the curtains between the audience and the stage can be dispensed with and the doors used instead.

The performers are directed as though standing on the stage facing the audience. R means Right, L Left, C Centre.]

SPEAKING CHARACTERS.

PAUL PERPLEX, an Artist.
FACT, a "Stubborn Thing."
FANCY, the Artist's Pet.
REASON, the "Calm-Eyed."
The NURSE, the SCHOOLBOY, the LOVER, the SOLDIER, the FATHER, the JUSTICE, the PATRIARCH.

COSTUMES.

PAUL. Dressing-gown or velvet jacket, smoking-cap, white pants, slippers.

FACT. Long brown robe, fastened at the waist with a rope, iron-gray wig, full beard.

FANCY. Female, gay dress, bright ribbons, floating hair.

REASON. Female, plain white dress, floating hair.

The NURSE. Calico dress and cap.

The SCHOOLBOY. Roundabout jacket, short pants, white stockings, rolling collar and cap.

The LOVER. Light pants, black velvet coat, wide collar spread over coat-collar, long black hair, black mustache.

The SOLDIER. Military uniform: red coat, blue pants with gilt stripes, sash, and sheathed sword at side.

The FATHER. Blue coat with brass buttons, dark pants, white vest, white necktie, gray wig, gray side-whiskers.

The JUSTICE (corpulent). Brown coat, breeches and top-boots, figured waistcoat, cane.

The PATRIARCH. Dressing-gown, nankeen pants, slippers, white waistcoat, long white hair, wrinkled face.

PART I.

PROLOGUE.

[Acted on the stage nearest the audience, front of the second set of curtains which are closed.]

SCENE. — *The painter's studio. Easel,* R., *with canvas on it.* PAUL *seated in front of it, with pallet and brush in hand.*

Paul. Mysterious canvas, on thy ghastly face,
My trembling pencil fails to leave a trace.
Behind thee lie rich treasures of delight,
Waiting the mystic touch to charm the sight,

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

TABLEAU I. — THE INFANT.

COSTUMES.

1. Brown dress, white apron.
2. White dress, cherry ribbons.
3. Dark dress; baby, white dress.
4. White dress, blue ribbons.
5. Dark pants, white vest, figured dressing-gown.

Waiting the master-hand to break the seal
And loose the beauties which thou dost conceal.
In vain I seek thy stubborn guard to break,
In vain I pray thy tenants to forsake
Their prison cells, and with a generous glow,
On a poor artist their sweet smiles bestow.
Alas! All vain; aloof they flickering stand,
Mocking the weakness of my unskilled hand.
O for some mighty power to break the chain,
To tear the veil, and give my fancy rein!

Enter FANCY, R.

Fancy. Here at your call, my master.
Paul (*rises*). Do I dream?
Fancy. Perhaps; no matter, it doth really seem
By your remarks that some one's wanted here.
So I've dropped in to offer you my aid.
My name is Fancy.
Paul. Dear delightful maid,
Welcome, thrice welcome! Thy bewitching face
With rays of glory fills this gloomy place.
Fancy. That's very pretty, — rays of glory. Fine
Young man, you are a follower of mine;
I read it in those dreamy eyes, that wavy hair,
That sighing bosom, and that languid air.
How can I serve you? Speak, and you shall find
Fancy a mistress bountiful and kind.
Paul. O gracious mistress, I would win a name,
I long for glory, and I sigh for fame.
Upon the canvas 'tis my fond desire
To fasten beauty, homage to inspire.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

TABLEAU II. — THE SCHOOL-BOY. 1.

A group of school-boys. No. 1 has an apple in his hand. No. 2 asks for a bite. Nos. 3, 4, and 5 are playing marbles. Costumes dark, with bright neckties.

Alas! my hand is weak; I strive in vain
The dancing, flickering shadows to enchain.

Fancy. Then come with me; my realm is beauty's home;
There all unchecked the master spirits roam,
Gather bright laurels from the rainbow mints,
That color-freighted pour the choicest tints.
Come, revel in my fleecy, cloudland bower;
There may be found the talisman of power.

Paul. Bright seraph, I am thine; or near or far,
I'll follow, follow thee forever —

Enter FACT, L.

Fact. Bah!
Humbug! Ne'er listen to the wily maid.
Vanishing vapors make her stock in trade;
There's naught substantial in the realm she rules,
Shadows and moonshine are the toys of fools.
Turn back with me and deal in stubborn facts;
Stern hardy life's the loadstone that attracts
The master spirits of the brush and pen,
Who reap bright laurels by portraying men.

Paul. And who are you? your garb is very queer,
Your features rugged, and your speech severe.

Fact. Men call me Fact.

Fancy. He is a stubborn thing,
With neither taste nor beauty, quick to fling
His gloomy mantle over Fancy's play,
And with the cry of "Duty" bear away
Her choicest spirits. Fie upon thee, knave
Base and ignoble! thou art Labor's slave.

1. 2. 6. 3. 4. 5.

TABLEAU III. — THE SCHOOL-BOY. 2.

The changes need very little explanation. No. 1 has given No. 2 the apple for a bite. Nos. 3 and 5 have quarrelled; and No. 4 is watching for a chance to snatch the marbles while the fighters are busy. No. 6 is a new character, — a bright little girl, dressed prettily, who, at the stroke of the bell, appears suddenly between curtains at back.

Fact. Nay, neighbor Fancy, thine's a saucy air,
A biting tongue for one so debonair.
Labor's my master, that I free avow;
The lordly monarch of the forge and plough,
The mighty builder and the broadcast sower,
Who rears and fashions with a matchless power.
Painter, to win a name, come, rove with me,
Mid Labor's subjects on the land and sea.

Fancy. Nay, nay, forbear; the path is rough to tread,
Fact's pictures are with ugliness o'erspread;
The sweating, delving busy life of care
Can show thee nothing fanciful or fair.

Fact. 'Twill show thee duty with its aims and ends,
Wherein much gloom with genial brightness blends.
If thou be wise, let Fancy cloudward go;
She's but a meteor, out of place, below.

Fancy. Well, you're polite.

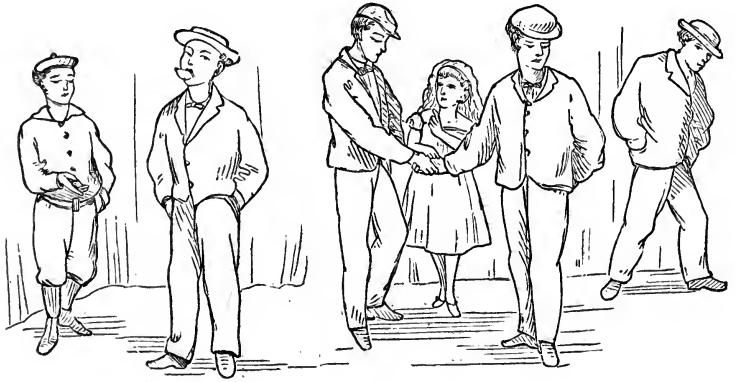
Fact. Thank you.

Paul. No more;
On my account ne'er quarrel I implore.
I thank you both for the expressed desire
With power my lagging pencil to inspire.
You, Fancy, point me to a fairy wold;
You, Fact, a stronger, sterner realm unfold; —
Now which to choose, I'm very much in doubt.

Enter REASON, C. (*between curtains*).

Reason. Well, my good friend, I've come to let you out.

Paul. Another stranger.



1. 2. 3. 6. 4. 5.

TABLEAU IV. — THE SCHOOL-BOY. 3.

No. 2 has a "hog" bite in his mouth. No. 1 looks ruefully at the small portion left in his hand. No. 6 is joining the hands of the combatants. No. 5 is creeping off with the marbles. When properly rehearsed, these make effective tableaux. The music should be varied to suit the picture.

Fact. Ah, good neighbor Reason,
You're always near.
Fancy. She's never out of season,
And always welcome; let her wise decree
Settle the difference betwixt you and me.
Paul. Madam, your visit seems quite *apropos.*
Will it please you some good counsel to bestow
On a poor artist, and for him decide
Which, Fact or Fancy, he shall take as guide?
Reason. Why not take both? I think, my painter friend,
You'll find that Fact and Fancy closely blend.
No scene of beauty and no work of skill
But needs them both perfection to instil.
The realm that Fancy pictures as divine
Stern Fact can match with one as good and fine;
In fields that Fact obscures with smoke and steam,
Fancy's embedded jewels brighter gleam.
Both are your friends; let them united serve,
And what they picture do you well observe.
Ne'er heed their quarrels, they but flirt and flout;
The very best of friends sometimes fall out.
So set to work and clothe the form of Fact
In Fancy's gayest raiment to attract,
Then will you tread the path that leads to fame,
And in its inmost temple carve your name.
Come, Fact, be stirring, let the painter gaze
On healthful life in all its devious ways.
Shakespeare, the foremost of poetic sages,
Has given to man a scale of seven ages;
Disclose them to our fame-desiring friend,

1. 2.

TABLEAU V. — YANKEE COURTSHIP. 1.

1. Bright red dress, calico apron, hair arranged in old-fashioned style. 2. Short pants, heavy boots, plaid vest, large-checked necktie, blue coat with brass buttons, bell-crowned hat.

With brightest hues that Fancy's art can lend.
To gain his triumphs all your powers combine,
And let your hands his brow with laurel twine.
Fact. She argues fairly.
Fancy. Justly, to my mind.
I give consent.
Fact. And I.
Paul. You're very kind.
I am your servant, lead me as you will;
I long at Genius' fount to drink my fill.
Reason. Then forward. Industry all thirst assuages.
Take your first lesson from the seven ages.
(FACT *takes* PAUL'S *right hand and points* R. FANCY *takes his left,* REASON *steps behind* PAUL, *and points* R. *Curtain falls on picture.*)

PART II.

THE SEVEN AGES.

Curtain rises as before; the first stage is bare, the second curtains closed.

Enter the NURSE, *with babe in her arms.*

Nurse. "You'd scarce expect one of his age
To speak in public on the stage,"
So I suppose it's really very *natteral*
That for his speech his *Nuss* should be collateral.
Well, he's an infant, bless his precious eyes
(Don't squirm so, deary, I'll keep off the flies),

1. 2. 3.

TABLEAU VI. — YANKEE COURTSHIP. 2.

No. 2 attempts to kiss No. 1. At the moment the bell strikes No. 3 should appear, L. Costume faded brown dress, white shawl pinned across breast, cap, and spectacles.

A little cherub — (*Child cries.*) Don't begin to squall,
You never can deceive the dears at all;
They know they are not angels, because why?
Angels will never drop down from the sky
To play at human babbies. Massy knows!
When their first little game is pains and woes,
O deary me, I think they are a trial!
Dosing with catnip-tea and *pennyrial*,
And walking nights, now isn't it severe
On us poor nurses who receive 'em here?
"The cry is still they come," for all of that, —
Bouncers and pigmies, skeleton and fat.
One half survive, the rest are taken off
By measles, chicken-pox, and whooping-cough.
Yet bless 'em, how we love 'em! (*Child cries.*) Don't you cry, —
He's stuck his big fist in his little eye.
Now say good night. (*Child cries.*) His speech is said,
Exit to "put him in his little bed." [*Exit*, R.

(*Music* — "*Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber*," *Piano. Curtains at back open, disclosing Tableau I. The curtains should be open time enough to count, moderately, fifteen, then closed slowly. Music continues till fall of curtain.*)

Enter the SCHOOL-BOY, L.

School-boy. To school, or not to school, on time, or late,
We boys oft find a question for debate.
Study is irksome, good behavior's stiff,

1. 3. 2.

TABLEAU VII. — YANKEE COURTSHIP. 3.

Music should be varied. For No. 1, "Yankee Doodle." No. 2, "Coming through the Rye." No. 3, "O dear, what can the matter be?"

And old Dame Learning's often in a miff;
'Twixt marks and merits wavering and fickle,
She sternly rules us with a rod in pickle,
Impresses strong her lessons on our backs,
Welted with energy and sealed with whacks.
"Boys will be boys," we hear the old folks say.
If they speak true, why rob us of our play?
For where's the boy, except he be a fool,
Who, of his choice, would ever go to school?
His brains to crush 'neath heaps of Roman dust,
All that remains of that great empire "bust";
To choke and struggle with ill-fated Greece,
In vain attempt to conquer e'en a peace,
When sport and exercise their strong arms bare,
And woo him to the water and the air.
The light boat waits impatient on the tide,
Green fields their carpets spread on every side,
Broad oaks their shadows fling across his way,
The ball and bat are eager for the play,
The free air thrills him; naught can hold him back,
Except the haunting fear of "Hooking Jack,"
And something better, — born of ancient lore, —
"The path to fame lies through the school-house door."

[*Exit*, R.

(*Music. Curtains at back open, disclosing Tableau II. After Tableau II. has been shown the usual time, a bell should be struck, when, without the curtain being dropped, the characters instantly change positions to Tableau III. Change, at stroke of bell, to Tableau IV.*)

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

TABLEAU VIII. — THE SOLDIER.

This Tableau represents an officer (No. 4) attacked by Zouaves (Nos. 3 and 5). The officer's costume should be red coat, white pants, red sash, dark cape lined with blue thrown over shoulder. Nos. 1 and 7 are private soldiers, dressed in blue. The Zouaves (Nos. 2, 3, 5, and 6) are dressed in white clothes, only relieved by red sashes around the waist. No. 1 has No. 2 by the throat, and is pointing a pistol at him. Nos. 3 and 5 are in the act of charging bayonets. No. 6 has his gun aimed at No. 1. No. 7 has his musket clubbed in the act of striking No. 6.

At the fall of the curtain, enter, L., *the* LOVER. *He speaks and gesticulates in a burlesque, lackadaisical manner.*

Heigh-ho! heigh-ho! Ah me! good gracious!
Cupid doth feed with appetite voracious
Upon my bleeding heart. O Blousabelle,
Your sparkling eyes enslave me with a spell.
I am enraptured with your beauteous face;
Enthralled, bewitched, by your enchanting grace.
O darling Blousa! honey-drop of sweetness!
Pink of perfection! violet of neatness!
Would I could press thee to this manly breast!
Soft-pillowed there thy golden curls to rest, —
Thy tender form to guard forevermore,
Devouring words within thy ears to pour,
To make this dull earth bloom like paradise.
Heigh-ho! ah me! now wouldn't it be nice?
Over a picture of successful love
My longing eyes too oft delighted rove,
Let me rehearse for your amusement here
How Zekiel wooed and won his Hulda dear.

(*Recitation of Lowell's poem,* "*The Courtin'.*" *Exit* LOVER, R. *Lively music. Curtains at back open, disclosing Tableau V. After the usual time, strike the bell, and the characters change positions to Tableau VI. At sound of bell, change to Tableau VII. Curtain falls.*

Enter SOLDIER, L.

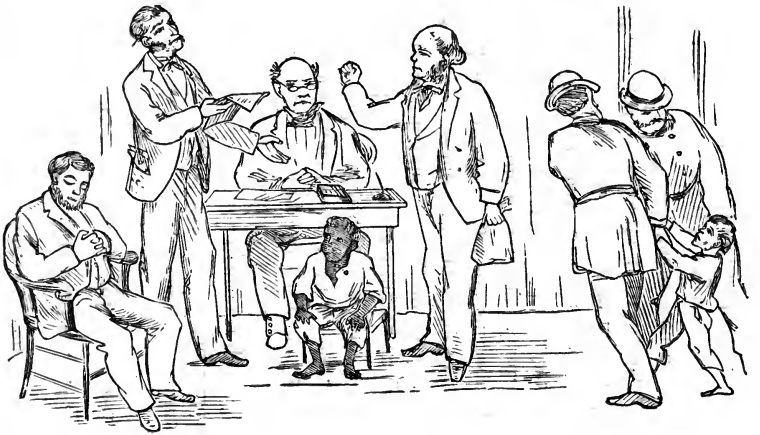
Soldier. When Peace, the olive-crowned, with ashen face,
Forsakes her throne, and to grim War gives place;

TABLEAU IX. — THE FATHER.

This group represents "Virginius and his Daughter," and should be made to imitate marble. The costumes should be white; unbleached cotton cloth is best. Wigs can be made by fitting "skull-caps" close to the head, and fastening upon them imitation of hair made of tambour cotton. The flesh should be thickly covered with white chalk. Have everything white. Place the characters well back.

When Treason stalks abroad, when Riot roars,
When Crime grows rampant, and Rebellion soars,
The Soldier, armed and mailed with martial power,
Stands forth the master-spirit of the hour.
The loud drum thrills him with its wild alarms,
The clash of steel his manly bosom warms,
The whirr of bullets and the cannon's roar
Make the hot blood in quicker currents pour,
Till, filled from crown to toe with bloody zeal,
No foeman can resist his crushing heel.
Up! on the ramparts, where with fierce assail
And deadly purpose, ploughs the iron hail;
Down! in the pit where ambush lieth low,
Fearless, defiant, leaps he on the foe.
So brave, so valiant, Glory doth delight
To wreathe his brow with laurels green and bright.
But when across the field of Labor's life
Peals the loud trump, dread harbinger of strife;
When through the workshop, busy marts of trade,
Through student's study, 'neath the classics' shade,
Through fashion's halls, where folly rules the hour,
Through homes that cherish love's domestic power,
Sounds the shrill notes that wake the hearts of all
To hurry forward at their country's call,
Sternly as Patriot he doth nobly stand
Against all foes to guard his native land.
A nation's gratitude, with smiles and tears,
Freshens his memory all the coming years;
And grand old Freedom, midst her brightest joys,
Points proudly to her gallant soldier boys.

[*Exit*, R.



1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

TABLEAU X. — THE JUSTICE.

1. Constable, asleep. 2 and 5. Lawyers gesticulating furiously. 3. The Justice, looking very wise. 4. The Culprit, a little darkey, looking at the lawyer with eyes rolled up. 6 and 8. Constables dragging a small boy. Costumes modern.

(*Curtains at back are drawn, disclosing Tableau VIII. Do not follow strictly the positions in the drawing, but make the picture animated and striking. Music should be of a martial character. Curtain falls.*)

Enter the FATHER, L.

Father. And what's a father? Some say an old fellow
With hair turned gray, and features turning yellow,
Full of his aches and pains, — a queer old chap
For whom his family don't care a rap,
Save that he pays the bills, keeps out of sight,
And locks the house up carefully at night.
Some say a tyrant, ruling with a sneer,
All frowns and wrinkles, with a voice severe
For youthful follies, and a stinging snap
When pealing laughter robs him of his nap.
And some say — bless them! — he's earth's paragon,
The kindest mortal that the sun shines on;
For all our woes, the ever-ready friend,
With kindly heart, to cheer and comfort lend.
Of all our joys, so ready e'er to share,
Warmed by his smile, they seem more bright and fair.
On all our secrets locks the trusty door,
And proves himself a confidant secure
For all our follies, eager to advise,
Lenient, forgiving, generous, and wise.
Half-way betwixt the cradle and the grave,
Washed by a sea of troubles, wave on wave,
The father takes his place, a beacon-light
To guide the wayward bark of youth aright.

TABLEAU XI. — THE PATRIARCH. 1.

1. White dress. 2. Dark clothes. 3. Blue suit. 4 and 5. White dresses.

The fierce and angry winds of strife may roar,
Misfortune's sullen clouds may hover o'er,
Yet through the darkest night of fear and woe,
The light of love, with calm and steady glow,
Flashes upon the tossed and sin-opprest,
A talismanic harbinger of rest.
Honor the father! History's bright page
Records his sacrifice in every age.
Turn backward to the ancient Roman days,
When stern Virginius did the world amaze.
When wicked Appius — vile and crafty knave! —
The fair Virginia sought to make his slave,
The noble father, with his cruel knife,
Her honor saved at cost of her dear life;
Look on this picture, let its teachings prove
Fathers can slay as well as save for love. [*Exit*, R.

(*Sad music. Curtains open, disclosing Tableau IX. Curtain falls.*)

Enter the JUSTICE, L.

Justice. Well, what's the matter? Burglary or theft?
Why am I rudely of my rest bereft?
Whose hencoop's plundered? Hey? whose ducks and geese
Have sloped with some despoiler of the peace?
What murderous youngster has been breaking bones,
Or smashing windows with obdurate stones?
Hey? No complaint? well, this is very queer;
I thought I heard a call for "Justice" here,
And I'm that high, official dignitary,
Learned, *pompostuous*, disciplined, and wary,

1. 2. 3. 6. 4. 5.

TABLEAU XII. — THE PATRIARCH. 2.

As the bell strikes, the old man's head falls back, his hand falls upon the boy's head. No. 1 sinks at his feet, and 4 and 5 rise. The drapery at the extreme back should be slowly drawn away, disclosing the angel 6.

Whose frown doth terrify the sneaking scamp
With dreams of iron bars and dungeons damp.
Ahem! the *squeak* of law is in my tread;
From off my path wild urchins slink with dread;
The biggest blackguard of a saucy crew
Shuts fast his mouth whene'er I come in view;
The straight-laced deacon with his stiffened back,
The learned doctor, the successful quack,
The gifted parson, and the man of wealth,
Admiring glances cast at me by stealth,
Because I hold the scales that win or lose,
And make them bend whichever way I choose, —
That is — of course — by *interlectual* sway.
I'm always right, — the scales the right obey, —
And so I'm ready to enforce the laws,
And find a verdict in a righteous cause,
Provided that the culprit is not rich,
For in that case my fingers always itch
To place across the bridge of this wise nose
A pair of spectacles with golden bows. [*Exit*, R.

(*Music. Curtains open, disclosing Tableau X. Curtain falls.*)

Enter the PATRIARCH, L.

Patriarch. "Last scene of all, which ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion."
Nay, nay, good master Shakespeare, thou art wrong,
For richest joys around the aged throng.
Upon the record of ascending years,
Oft flecked with sunshine, blotted oft with tears,

Where can be found so kind and true a friend
As keen-eyed Memory, who doth freely lend
Unto the "seventh age" her matchless power,
To deck and glorify the sunset hour?
Upon the patriarch she doth free bestow
Her brightest jewels plucked from long ago:
Pleasures of youth, deep buried in the past,
Wakened to life, come merrily trooping past;
Triumphs of manhood, with new laurels crowned,
And prouder bearing, thickly gather round.
The babe, the youth, the lover, soldier, sage,
Each in his time displays again his age;
Each at the summons will repeat his part,
And all are welcome to the old man's heart.
What scene of happiness so pure and bright
As "home, sweet home," the temple of delight,
Wherein the patriarch as an honored guest
Beloved, respected, finds a welcome rest,
Until the Master's messenger of peace
Shall bid life's sentinel his watch to cease!
Then ends the journey, then earth's race is run,
Then the *eternal* age is entered on. [*Exit*, R.

(*Music*, "*Home, sweet Home.*" *Curtain opens, disclosing Tableau XI. Bell strikes, and change to Tableau XII. Music sad and soft until the curtain falls.*

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